

THE BLUE ENVIRONMENT PARTY

ENVIRONMENTAL AND GENERAL POLICIES

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES:

Policies to encourage a technology revolution:

- Restructure the tax system
- Introduce a fossil fuel ban
- Technology
- Planning & industrial policy
- Our homes
- Nuclear power

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GENERAL POLICIES

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

Our policies to encourage a technology revolution:

Restructure our tax system to incentivise change

The good news is that we will phase out income tax, corporation tax and VAT. We will replace the lost revenue with taxes on fossil fuels (with safeguards for those on low incomes and in special circumstances). This will send a strong price signal to all markets to start working out how to avoid or reduce their use of fossil fuels wherever they can.

A fossil fuel ban in 20 years' time

We will introduce a complete ban on emitting warming gases in the UK, to come into effect in 20 years' time. This clear, advance notice will give everyone 20 years to adjust, and will be a spur to action. (Note: the tax system proposed above will be readjusted at that time.)

Technology

In the 1940s the allies assembled their top scientists for the Manhattan Project to invent the atomic bomb. We will introduce a Green Manhattan Project to kickstart innovation in all the science and technologies we need. We will invest in new technology with the same intensity as for World War II, when we perfected radar, the jet engine, sonar and countless vital innovations in record time. We can do it again.

Planning and industrial policies

We will streamline planning policies to enable rapid development of new energy sources. Investment in renewable capacity should be encouraged with guaranteed fixed prices for selling power for a fixed period. We will invest heavily in renewables, and commission nuclear power, as carefully and safely as possible, to meet any extra need.

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Our homes

We support the aim of making each person's home self-sufficient in energy, and even to become a power-generating source for each homeowner and the nation. This will reduce dependency on big oil, coal and electricity and insecure imports.

We will change the way utility companies bill us. Current bills have a high fixed standing charge, and often a decreasing price per unit consumed. This means that the first units, which virtually all of us need, are very expensive, but subsequent units, which many of us could reduce by simple energy-saving measures, are relatively cheap. The result is that the reduction in the bill for any energy that you save is of little value. We will eliminate the standing charge and make the first units cheap and subsequent ones increasingly more expensive. This will result in large savings if you cut down your usage.

Pro nuclear

We need every watt of carbon-free power-generating capacity. We must go full speed ahead with both renewables and nuclear – there is no contradiction. We need nuclear, at least for the immediate future, to see us through to a new era where we derive our energy from sustainable and renewable sources.

We are in favour of nuclear power, not because it is perfect, but because it is the least bad option we have. This is our take on the standard objections to nuclear power:

- **It's dangerous, like Chernobyl:** Yes, Chernobyl was scary. However, 10 simultaneous Chernobyl disasters would arguably still be less of a threat to human health than the ordinary use of existing coal-fired stations. Overall, nuclear's safety record is better than all other major forms of energy generation.
- **It's expensive:** But if we use private investment, surely the economics is up to the investors?
- **It takes too long:** But if we needed it for a war, I bet we could do it fairly quickly.
- **It will crowd out renewables:** But if we move away from fossil fuels, we will need everything we can get – there is room for all.
- **What about the waste?** Handling the waste is technically feasible, and the amount is surprisingly small. The problem is the politics of where to put it. With enough will, that is solvable. First, we need to reuse the material to generate all the energy possible. Then we need to find geologically stable and impermeable granite formations with no faults, drill deep holes and cap them off, leaving no more than a background count at the surface. As leader of the party I would be willing to live close to such a site as long as the count was background. It might even be a useful source of heat.
- **Decommissioning:** Forget decommissioning; just build a new station on the old sites
- **Terrorists could blow up the stations:** They haven't so far, but we should be extra careful. It is a risk.
- **Nuclear weapons proliferation:** This is a risk too. However, it will happen in any event. We can do a lot to design the proliferation risk out of power generation. Our party would rather take our chances with a terrorist than with global warming.

We know nuclear power works, and it can step in until we get better at generating energy from renewables. For example, France has for many years received some 80% of its electricity from nuclear power. Nuclear is much *less* risky for the planet than fossil fuels, although we should have the most sensible designs and the best safeguards.

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It must be done thoughtfully, cognisant of the risks, but we should not reject it because of excessive fears and prejudices, only to do something worse. It is important to remember also that the new nuclear technologies are much safer and work on a smaller scale. They should be tried.

Like you, we don't trust people not to make mistakes. However, amongst the general fear of radiation, there are some crumbs of comfort. The really nasty stuff created in a nuclear explosion tends to be quite short-lived. That is why you have been able to stand safely, though sombrely, at Hiroshima's ground zero since soon after the war. Any harm declines with the square of the distance away from you, so any distance you can place between yourself and a radiation source very soon becomes an effective barrier. Geiger counters are cheap and reliable pieces of equipment, and very sensitive to any radiation – most schools have one. It is therefore difficult to hide radiation from the public. Life evolved in a world that was far more radioactive than today, and appears to have a higher tolerance than one would imagine.

There are far worse things we do casually to our world on a daily basis than nuclear power. The ongoing mass production of long-lived harmful chemicals, which life has not evolved with, is one. Cutting down the rainforest is another, as are the widespread burning of coal and the plundering of the oceans. These are things that we live with and accept every day, but they do immeasurably more harm to the planet and to us as individuals than nuclear power.

Foreign policy

Whatever we do in the UK is pointless unless other countries stop their emissions too. We therefore need to lead by example and persuade others to join in. We are confident that they, too, will want the abundant cheap, clean energy we will develop, and we will be happy to sell it to them.

We will gear foreign aid and development loans to protecting earth's natural climate-control systems. The tropical rainforest is a key example. The forest creates thick white cloud at the equator, which reflects much of the sun's heat, like a parasol. Without the forest, the cloud will not form, and the heat will stream in. We are allowing this precious shield to be destroyed by a few desperados and opportunists seeking to make a few pennies – some even in the name of biofuels. Surely we can put this right? Saving the forest is one of the most profitable things we can do – the land is cheap.

We should promote female education everywhere. This is a practical and effective way to slow world population growth – which is a very urgent priority.

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GENERAL POLICIES

Here we set out a sample of our views on matters besides the environment. The emphasis is on better ways of doing things rather than spending taxpayer's money.

NHS AND HEALTH

We use and love the NHS, and want it to be even better. We have no specific expertise other than common sense and our experience of being customers ourselves. There have been improvements over the life of the last Government, but many NHS workers will tell you that they could always do much more with the same money. So we would focus on efficiencies and inexpensive improvements.

GPs

Our local GPs have always been good. We need to be sure everyone has this happy experience across the country, with easy access rather than two-week waits.

Hospitals

Most treatment is good, and it is hard to criticise a service that has cured so many of our illnesses. But there is always room for improvement.

- The top management can seem far removed from what is going on. To counter this tendency we would return power to patients by enhancing local voluntary Patients' Associations, who would really care about their local hospital
- The Association would have a permanent office in the hospital where all patients could go with their complaints, suggestions and questions
- The Association would be manned by tough and savvy volunteers who know how to ask questions and wouldn't stand for any nonsense. They would be unpaid and independent of the hospital's management structure. They would receive training in how to hold managers to account. They could raise standards, gather feedback and, if required, tell managers to pull their socks up, with power to recommend dismissals
- Patients may be scared to give feedback openly to a hospital if they think it might affect their or their family's treatment in the future. We need to find ways to gather this vital feedback discreetly so the Patients' Associations can use it to hold trusts to account. Feedback and continuous fair criticism, both positive and negative, are a good way to make organisations improve
- We would encourage excellence in hospital management, using ideas from those, such as Gerry Robinson, who have already achieved improvements and, most importantly, from ordinary frontline NHS workers
- We are suspicious of too many overpaid, unaccountable non-medical bureaucrats running hospitals and taking poor decisions
- We are wary of the privatisation of key systems and parts of the NHS

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Public health

Great strides have been made in protecting public health in recent decades. We would continue with this even more vigorously, taking in areas such as public health advice, food labelling, challenging industry lobbies and so on.

We need to keep a strict watch on the tendency of the world chemical industry to be too free in their promotion of long-lived harmful chemicals such as PCBs and dioxins, simply because they are so profitable.

EDUCATION

We are not experts in education and can only take a common-sense approach. Basically our state schools need to be as good as the French, Germans, Swiss, Chinese and so on if we are to compete economically. Our perception is that, right now, they are not.

How do we get a top-class system? All we know is that there has been too much politics in our education for 50 years, and there is no quick fix. The creation of giant comprehensives was one dismal result of this. Less dogma and more common sense would help.

Policy

- Surely we should focus on excellence and raise standards all round? For too long politics has been in command, and things like equality and fairness have driven out excellence
- We must somehow get to smaller class sizes (see ideas below for boosting staff), and probably smaller schools
- We should not be frightened of competition in the classroom and on the sports field. It is a part of daily life
- End dumbing down – it is disrespectful of people's true abilities
- We need more intensive streaming and/or special schools, so that all types of potential can be identified and developed, whether academic or vocational
- For the academically inclined, let's concentrate on the harder subjects - fewer 'media studies' courses
- For the vocationally inclined, we need excellence in vocational training

Teaching

We need to become a society where we all aspire to learn and teaching is highly respected, as in China and Japan.

Teachers need to be an elite. Obviously the head teacher is especially vital and they need to be first class – we need to do even more to secure the best people. We need to improve the quality of and respect for teachers generally.

Some ideas include:

- Involve more people from the local community. Use well-educated professionals, perhaps retired, to teach extra lessons part-time where they can help, e.g. an accountant to take a maths class, a doctor to teach biology, a French person to teach French, etc.
- Provide online access for all to the best teachers, as per the Open University.
- Find better ways of dealing with disruptive children. (Why not employ disruptive children from previous generations to keep order? They would be pretty tough. At a certain point it should not have to be the teacher's job.)

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- Like most people, we learnt 80% of what we know from the top 20% of our teachers. We must be able to sack ineffective teachers and reward good ones. If teaching unions cooperate, that is fine – if not, we must take them on. The teaching unions are well placed to help the public with ideas for improving the system, and improving schools

Governorship

We would:

- Reform Ofsted. Make sure their criteria reflect an absolute standard and not simply the ‘value added’ by the school
- Make sure schools do not use league-table massaging tactics, such as discouraging students from taking an exam because they will do badly and lower the school’s overall scores
- Improve the governorship system, and introduce more active parents’ associations as a tier below, manned in a similar way to the hospital patients’ associations suggested above (see ‘NHS and Health’)

Curriculum and standards

We would:

- Restore everyone’s confidence in the exams by making sure they are comparable in difficulty to those of past decades
- Consider bringing back the old system of grades being allocated in percentages according to performance against the peer group taking the exam
- Prepare pupils to be self-employed by teaching basic legal, accounting, self-reliance and life skills, as well as entrepreneurship and tax knowledge
- Discourage ‘teaching to the test’
- Encourage creative thinking and emphasise problem-solving techniques in all subjects, especially maths and science. Creativity has always been one of this country’s great strengths, and we should encourage it

Sport

- We would try to restore school playing fields, or at least stop more being sold for development, and encourage shared community use

For Universities:

We would:

- Provide grants for studying science and other key subjects
- Create a scheme where top students can receive university grants if (i) they achieve good results, and (ii) they agree to teach in the state school system for a couple of years, as part of an elite corps of teachers

THE ECONOMY

We would aim to:

- Stimulate green industry and green jobs with the same intensity that was seen in World War II, when many new technologies were developed in record time. Done well this could bring us back to full employment quite quickly. This is one area where funding may be required; it would have to be taken from other areas of government spending
- Boost sectors involving science and technology

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- Aim to reduce the relative importance of the housing and finance sectors by encouraging the growth of other sectors in the long term
- Currently state spending is some 50% of the UK economy (up from a long-term average of around 36-42%). This is too high, as it crowds out the private sector and creates a tax burden. We should aim to reduce this to 30% or less over the long term, preferably by growing the private sector and rolling back the state

The very basic ‘ball park’ numbers for the British economy in 2010 (in £ billions) are:

Size of UK economy	1400
Government spending (480 from tax, 170 from borrowing)	650
Total accumulated government debt to date (growing fast)	1000
<i>Key departments' expenditure</i>	
Pensions and benefits	200
Health	100
Education	80
Defence	30

The level of debt leaves us exposed. For example, if interest rates went up to 10% the government would have to pay £100bn interest on its £1000bn debt – about the same as it spends on the NHS. So reducing this debt is a matter of considerable urgency.

THE BUDGET AND THE NATIONAL DEBT

The total accumulated government debt in the UK has gone from 40% to 70% of GDP in the last two years, and is increasing fast. In the long term we should aim get it back down to 40%.

Currently the government borrows more than a quarter of its annual income (12% of GDP). This adds more to the national debt every year. It needs to be tackled.

The situation is worse than it appears to be, because some obligations, such as PFI and your right to a state pension, are not counted as government liabilities.

- We need to be serious about reducing public spending, and getting a great deal more out of the money that we do spend
- The public needs a much better understanding of public finances. Every citizen should be given a simple explanation of how the government spends our money. We need pie charts and other displays showing key economic data on permanent displays and billboards outside Westminster and on the internet for all to see, understand and talk about openly. The aim would be to make us more informed voters. Otherwise it is too easy for a demagogue to blind us with empty promises for the spending of our own credit
- We must examine quangos for their usefulness and eliminate as many as possible. We could offer prizes for identifying candidates for elimination
- We must tackle public sector pensions and move to defined contribution schemes only
- We would create a website where the public are rewarded for highlighting examples of wastes of public money

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BUSINESS

We are fully supportive of business, as are the other mainstream parties, with a few generalised reservations:

- We should do more to level the playing field between tax treatment of debt and equity finance. At the moment, debt is unfairly favoured
- We would improve shareholder powers and controls over management
- We would curb management excesses, and align their interests better
- We are especially in favour of technology businesses

PUBLIC SERVICES

A country like France tends to run better public services – trains, hospitals, roads – than we do. Why? Mainly because in France some of the best minds compete to go into public services. In the UK they go into things such as banking and consultancy.

- We should copy the highly respected French Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) which is a sort of Harvard Business School for public service
- We should establish a new culture of prestige and excellence in public services
- We should copy ideas from other countries that have better public services than ours

BANKS

The UK financial sector has become excessive in relation to our economy. For example in the 1980s the total balance sheets of all UK banks were some 50% of total UK GNP. Today they are around 550% of GNP. This is an Icelandic style risk to our economy in that we can't afford to pay for it if it goes wrong. Part of the reason for the growth in the banking sector is the subsidy provided via implicit government guarantees and bail-outs.

- The public deposit protection guarantee should only cover depositors, not whole banks. In case of default, 100% of the deposits should be moved to a safe alternative bank, and the stricken bank be allowed to fail
- The annual premium paid by a bank for the government deposit guarantee should rise and fall with the bank's assessed risk. The premium should be made public
- Factors that would reduce the cost of the premium would be: sound pay structures and sensible bonuses, evidence of shareholders holding managers frequently to account, conservative, understandable balance sheets, measured risk-taking and so on. People would soon stop unwarranted bonuses if it put the bank's premium up sharply
- If shareholders allow a bank to become too risky for the government to guarantee its depositors, the depositors' money could be taken away to a safe place pre-emptively and the bank and its other creditors left to their own devices
- All creditors other than depositors should face the risk of losing their investment in a bank failure. This would concentrate their minds on how to get the management of banks right

CONSUMER DEBT CULTURE

We would like to:

- Encourage a return to more of a thrift and savings culture
- Restrict advertising/promotion of credit by lenders
- Actively discourage excessive personal debt, with public campaigns similar to anti-smoking campaigns, paid for by a levy on banks

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EXCESSIVE PAY GAP

A culture of excessive pay for top bosses has crept in to both the public and private sectors, unrelated to actual performance. This is particularly galling in the public sector.

We should consider an ‘excessive pay’ tax on public sector organisations (i.e. the employer rather than the recipient) paying any salary over, say, £100,000. The tax would be imposed at stepped rates pro rata the salary paid, unless there is some tangible, real success or increase in productivity to point to.

It would be beneficial to the whole economy if a similar downward pressure could be brought to bear on excessive pay in private sector companies too.

We would try to redirect rewards to genuine wealth creators, innovators and entrepreneurs via further capital gains tax exemptions rather than salary.

We believe that excessive inequality in income earning is detrimental to social cohesion, but it is better to prevent the excessive pay at source than to have the state redistribute it.

HOUSING

Housing has become too expensive in our country. This diverts investment away from productive areas of the economy and disadvantages those who don’t own a house.

There is some sense in providing a little more supply to balance demand, but the primary distortions come from the demand side, therefore we should:

- Discourage speculation in house prices and excessive diversion of wealth into housing
- Slowly phase out harmful subsidies, such as capital gains tax relief on a main residence
- Discourage excessive mortgage finance
- Make VAT treatment the same between new build and restoration
- Combine housing and regional policy to create a win-win of regeneration and housing provision
- Enhance programmes to retrofit all buildings to bring them up to good energy-saving and insulation standards

STATE PENSION

To reduce the strain on public finances, people who are fit and healthy should be discouraged from drawing their state pension entitlement. How could you do this? Suppose we made a deal that anyone over retirement age who continued working paid only National Insurance and was exempt from income tax on their job earnings, provided they did not draw a state pension while they worked. That might do it.

REGIONAL POLICY

We accept that in a small island it is better to provide jobs where people are, rather than force them to move to other overcrowded areas of the country.

Therefore we should re-build economically depressed areas and re-house people in those areas when they have been rebuilt. Use tax incentives if necessary, such as zones of reduced taxation, like the Special Economic Zone policy in China.

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POLICE

Our sense is that the police have been through a period when they have lost touch with the public and lost confidence in themselves, but there are signs of an improvement.

We still need a better police force - better led, more accountable, with better judgement and higher morale, and with an understanding that they are public servants, not masters. The job of the police is to protect, not harass, the law-abiding public. It is to catch and deter criminals and free our estates and streets from anti-social yobs. They should do it more effectively. Respectable people concerned, for example, about climate change, are not a public enemy.

In anything less than a police state, policing can work only if it has the confidence of the public, and the public is often crucial in providing assistance and information. In this regard we think the existing scheme for drafting in part-time community police auxiliaries is a good idea that should be expanded. Our specific thoughts are:

- Powers to deal with terrorists should be used circumspectly and intelligently
- We should split off the unpopular highway patrol and speed camera operations from the police
- We should consider a community/police-manned Japanese Kobun sentry box system in estates and strategic points in urban areas. This is probably the best answer to gang culture

LAW AND ORDER

Many of us feel that crime, violence and anti-social behaviour are out of control. We have seen too many wreaths tied to school railings. We would consult with the public as to what to do about it, as tough measures would need a consensus, especially to deal with the gangs, knives, guns, weapon dogs and yobbish behaviour. We believe that something different and radical needs to be tried, possibly a zero tolerance scheme, as was successful in New York, in combination with a Kobun system (described above).

We feel that people have lost any confidence they once had that they can and should tackle criminals themselves, following a string of high-profile cases that began with Norfolk farmer Tony Martin. Whatever the rights and wrongs of specific cases, people are now less willing to intervene or help, especially when children are involved. They have become frightened of any allegation of abuse or assault. A good citizen feels he is at risk of being arrested if he intervenes to prevent a crime. We must redress this balance, as it is very disempowering and corrosive of society.

We feel people should be allowed more rights to defend themselves and others against crime, intimidation and assault, and we should do more to protect those who intervene positively.

IMMIGRATION

We believe that our population is already overly large for our island, especially if we ever have to try to feed ourselves without imports. In World War II it was hard enough to do this with only 40m people.

The myth that a large or growing population means a stronger economy is wrong. If it were right, then, broadly speaking, countries like Bangladesh would be rich and countries like Switzerland poor.

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We should aim for a high GNP per head rather than a large population, and we should look after and make best use of the people who are already here.

Given the threat of climate change, we should aim to take advantage of our declining birth rate to reduce our population by natural means, not increase it by immigration. We would of course continue to offer asylum to genuine asylum seekers.

DEFENCE

Future conflicts are likely to arise from global warming. We need to be prepared, and a nuclear deterrent may become more, not less, important in the future, as populations grow and resources come under increasing pressure.

- It is not helpful to deploy the main branches of the armed services in an unwinnable fourth Afghan war. We need to find an exit from Afghanistan sooner rather than later
- The conflict with fundamentalist Islam is a minor matter compared to the other threats we face. Dealing with it is a question of intelligent foreign policy, engagement with Islamic thought, addressing Palestinian grievances, winning hearts and minds, intelligence, the SAS and covert counter-terrorism
- The armed services need to improve their strategic thinking capabilities so as to be able to tell politicians clearly what they can and cannot do. Without knowing the exact nature of the advice given, it would appear that they failed to do this adequately in Iraq and Afghanistan
- It is more than likely the armed forces will need to deploy to protect earth's climate assets, such as the rainforest, and to police compliance with international climate treaties. They should gear up to do this

AGRICULTURE

We must ensure that our food production systems are sustainable in the long term without fossil fuels or excessive chemicals, as one day we may have to rely on them for all of our food.

Similarly, we must ensure that soil fertility and natural capital is maintained for the long term, so we will always be able to feed ourselves, come what may.

TRANSPORT

- We need a more efficient rail network. Ticket prices should never be more than the fuel cost of the same journey by car
- We should support and encourage all green forms of transport, including canals and rail, especially for goods that do not need to travel quickly
- We must find and deploy an alternative power source for that bastion of individual freedom, the motor car

EUROPE

- We would like to take back the UK's fishing rights and implement vast 'no take' marine reserves as soon as possible
- Like most people in the UK, we are happy to be a member of the EU for free trade, but are uncomfortable with any 'united states of Europe', and the democratic deficit inherent in the system, or any fetters on taking action as we see fit
- We should not be a large net contributor to European funds
- The EU may be a useful platform for environmental policy, but we should move ahead on our own anyway

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CONSUMER PROTECTION

Tackling Rip-off Britain

We need a powerful new Ministry for the Consumer to help tackle ‘rip-off Britain’. It should take on groups such as banks, professions, train companies, local government, supermarkets, parking ticket authorities, the Inland Revenue and the rest, and redress the many abuses going on in our everyday lives.

Take, as a small but significant example, 0845 and other numbers, which make money from our phone calls without permission – how did we come to accept this? Too often when you call your bank, credit card company, utility company and others, there is no option but to listen to a series of menus and messages. In some cases, this just makes the company more money. This is completely unacceptable. These numbers should be used only for specialised services where you opt in and agree to pay. And yet which of us feels we can stop this practice?

Most of our regulators and ombudsmen are far too ineffective and certainly not proactive. Where there is a regulator, they must be kept to the mark by meeting with volunteer consumer organisations on a monthly basis. They should be more accountable, showing successful interventions, and be more accessible to the public. They should be fired promptly if they don’t get results. The culture of requiring all complaints to go back to the person who you are complaining about needs review. It rarely achieves a satisfactory response.

Some more ideas:

- We should challenge any company that charges its customers more in Britain than elsewhere
- We should tackle anyone using consumer protection measures against the consumer. Things such as ‘data protection’ or ‘health and safety’ are sometimes used as excuses to act against the consumer’s interest
- We need a system where the public can easily notify a central authority of abuses. The first step might be to create a website to highlight consumer rip-offs, which can be added to by the public
- Each company/organisation should have an official, openly readable complaints page, where complaints and suggestions can be posted
- Any needless inconvenience to the consumer/traveller should be discouraged. Planned maintenance and roadworks should be done with minimum disruption and maximum notice. A proper regime of respect for the public should be put in place, and someone should always be answerable for decisions
- We should end all forms of self-regulation, such as police by police, lawyers by lawyers and so on, and introduce proper independent scrutiny by people with consumer experience

That is just a beginning. I am sure the public will provide many more ideas – we need a forum to capture them all.

CIVIC PRIDE AND SOCIAL COHESION

Instil a culture of self-reliance and contributive citizenship

- We should champion a culture of self-reliance, as opposed to state dependence

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- As a rule, benefits should be given only to those who need them, not handed out to all; otherwise it encourages an unnecessary dependency culture
- Ideally every citizen should have the opportunity to contribute some form of taxation to the state, each according to their means. If income tax is to be retained, which we are against (see our Environmental Policies), then there is a strong argument that rates should start at a very low level, perhaps even a 5p rate as well as a 10p rate to include as many people as possible. There should be a voluntary option to be able to pay in kind if you do not have the means to pay any tax at all, for which people would receive recognition from the state
- We should eliminate poverty and benefit traps and minimise the flow of money back and forth between citizens and state. It is in everyone's interests to reduce spending and taxation to a sensible level

Empower a nation of independent-minded volunteers

Bossy governments, professionals, experts and quangocrats have first disempowered us, and then failed to improve our lives. The trend has been towards centralisation in the last 20 years, e.g. the English regional governments. We need to reverse this, and start a genuine decentralisation of power.

- We need more democratic ways of running all our institutions, starting at the local hospital, the local school and the parish council.
- We should put the local civic-minded volunteer back in charge – they are the only ones we can really trust not to be swayed by job security, high salaries or targets.
- Relying on centralised quangos such as Ofsted or the Health and Safety Executive has its limits. We need good local volunteers to apply local common sense.

Restore common sense

We would like to roll back the excessive 'health & safety' culture stifling society, relax excessive political correctness, bring back common sense, judgement and initiative and cut red tape and senseless regulation.

Create more public holidays

Our public holidays are based on religious events or anonymous bank holidays, but none of them celebrates our nation or its historic figures or events. We suggest four more public holidays per year and would run a public competition to see what person or event should be commemorated. We would nominate such things as the Battle of Britain (31 Oct) and the signing of the Magna Carta (15 June), but we would leave the choice open to the British public.